

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0670

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN MILITARY ANXIOUS TO CONTINUE GOOD RELATIONS
WITH USMILGRP IN VENEZUELA

1. DESPITE THE CURRENT SPATE OF RECRIMINATIONS BY THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE U.S. IN CONNECTION WITH ENERGY AND TRADE MATTERS, WE HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED A NUMBER OF UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS FROM THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY THAT IT IS ANXIOUS THAT NOTHING DISTURB THE GOOD RELATIONS WHICH FOR MANY YEARS HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN THE ARMED SERVICES OF THE U.S. AND VENEZUELA. IN PARTICULAR, HIGH-RANKING VENEZUELAN MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ASSURE BOTH THE MILGRP COMMANDER AND THE DEFENSE ATTACHE HERE OF THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY'S WISH THAT THE MILGRP REMAIN IN VENEZUELA AND THAT THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY FORCES CONTINUE TO LOOK TO THE U.S. FOR THE PURCHASE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

2. ON JANUARY 15 BGEN CAMILO VETHENCOURT, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE EXPRESSED TO THE MILGRP COMMANDER THE ARMY'S DESIRE THAT THE MILGRP STAY IN VENEZUELA AND ITS WISH TO PROCURE NEW EQUIPMENT FROM THE U.S. A FEW DAYS EARLIER VENEZUELAN NAVY CNO VADM ALFONSO MENDOZA RAMIREZ TOLD THE CHIEF OF THE MILGRP'S NAVY SECTION THAT ANY STRAINS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND VENEZUELA WOULD NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE GOOD
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RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND VENEZUELAN NAVIES, AND THAT THE

VENEZUELAN NAVY REMAINS INTERESTED IN OBTAINING AND OVERHAULING SHIPS IN THE U.S. OFFICERS OF THE MILGRP AND THE U.S. ARMY ATTACHE HAVE RECENTLY ALSO NOTED A NUMBER OF OTHER INDICATIONS THAT THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY WANTS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE USMILGRP, AND THAT A MARKED SPIRIT OF CORDIALITY EXISTS BETWEEN IT AND THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY FORCES.
MCCLINTOCK

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